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A Half Solved Mystery

By MARIA L. COOPER

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Despite the opposition of my parents and certain head shakings on the part of intimate friends, I persisted in my engagement to Edward Hilsley. There was something about him beyond these warnings that made me uncomfortable. He would make an engagement to be with me during an evening, break it and give no satisfactory explanation. After he had done this several times I resolved the next time to corner him by forcing him to tell me where he had been. When that next time came round he claimed that between the hours of 8 and 11 he had been at home. Without his knowledge I asked his sister as to his whereabouts on the evening in question, and she told me that he had not been at home, but said he had been with me.

This convinced me that he was deceiving me, and I told him he must either make a clean breast of the matter or I would break our engagement. He took a solemn oath that he never left his home between 8 o'clock during the evening he was supposed to be with me and 9 o'clock the next morning. When I asked how that could be he told me that to tell would involve others whose acts he had no right to divulge.

Curiosity now became my dominant motive. I would have broken with my fiancé had it not been that I believed I could get his secret by remaining engaged to him, whereas if I sent him away I would never know it. I pretended to be very much hurt at his want of confidence in me, and he seemed equally put out that I did not feel assured his statement was true and because I should endeavor to force him to reveal a secret which involved others.

The result of a half hour's probing gave me the impression that he was connected with several persons of both sexes who were united by some secret bond, but that this bond was of an especial importance did not appear. It did not in any way explain how Edward could have been in the house for three hours one evening when he was supposed to be visiting me. And what had the events of these three hours to do with the persons whose secrets he would betray by making an explanation?

After a long period of questioning and waiting, questioning again and waiting again, I gave up trying to get the secret. I, however, applied one test before taking final action. I asked to be admitted to this coterie of which Edward was supposed to be a member. He said that I must be elected and the number was complete. By this time I knew that I should get no satisfaction, and, since I was not mind-

ed to marry a man who had a secret from me, I broke the engagement.

All this was a few months before the great earthquake when our city was destroyed. Among those who did not turn up after that dreadful calamity was my former fiancé. His house was one that fell at the first shock, and only one member of the family had had time to escape. This person said that Edward Hilsley was not in the house at the time of the quake. When the debris was removed every body was found except his. This indicated that he had probably been killed elsewhere. But, though his friends kept track of all the bodies taken out, his was never found—at least not identified.

Very naturally I connected his mysterious disappearance with the reasons for which I had broken my engagement. If I had been puzzled before I was more puzzled now. A new development was that one of Edward's most intimate friends was among the missing, and his body was not found. There were other persons not accounted for, but the man mentioned was the only one I happened to know as one of his friends. This deepened the mystery for me, though for me alone, for I never revealed what Edward had told me, or, rather, what he had not told me.

One morning I took up a newspaper and saw an explanation of the mystery that was haunting me so persistently that I was beginning to break down under it. The paper contained an announcement that the lot on which I knew had stood the Hilsley house had been purchased and the foundations taken out to make way for new ones. A space had been walled up, evidently by amateur masons, and covered with an arched brick roof, the entrance to which was an iron door. The door being forced, its latch was found to have been wedged by the earthquake so that it could not be opened. There had been entrance from without through a cellar door.

Inside this inclosure, which was furnished, were found five skeletons—three men and two women. On a table lay a note addressed "To Those Who Shall Find Our Bodies," stating that they were planned in by what they supposed to be an earthquake and were starving to death. The only information as to the cause of their being there were the words, "Our secret dies with us."

I have alluded to this as an explanation. It was an explanation that threw me into a far greater state of curiosity than before. I am consumed day and night with a desire to know what could have been the object of this secret coterie.

On Time.

By the time a Chinese boy is five years old his mother has got a wife picked out for him, and, though he may never see her until he is a young man, he is expected to marry her when he is eighteen. If he doesn't the law steps in and wants to know what's the matter. There are no bachelors in China. They must marry or come over to America to do laundry work.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Edward Stokes.

H. D. Atkinson.

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HENRY L. STIMSON.

Republican Nominee For the
Governorship of New York.



FATAL ENCOUNTERS.

Reckless Gun Play in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania.

Fighting with revolvers in Allegheny county, Pa., has cost three lives within 48 hours; three participants have been wounded in the four engagements and two of these are in a serious condition. The toll of reckless gun play is:

The dead:
Patrolman Daniel Santon, shot and killed by Robert Robertson, a negro, in a Jones avenue tenement.

Collins Wells, southern negro, killed in a revolver battle with police and detectives in Corapolis.

Michael Joyce, of Universal, shot and killed by "Dic" Johnstone, while trying to plunge a knife into his enemy.

The wounded:
Patrolman Henry Miller, of Corapolis, shot Saturday in a running battle; will recover.

Joseph Paris, of White street, McKeesport, shot in the head by Leon Letson, a boarder, during a duel.

Leon Letson, boarder at the Paris home, shot in the groin by Paris.

ROOSEVELT IN ATLANTA.

He Spoke in Memory of Late Joel Chandler Harris.

Before an audience of 7,500 Atlantans at the Auditorium-Armory, Saturday night, Colonel Theodore Roosevelt paid a hearty sincere and inspiring tribute to the memory of the late Joel Chandler Harris, and expressed the fervent hope that the movement for a monument to the memory of Uncle Remus would be a most gratifying success.

It was a splendid audience that faced the speaker when he reached his place on the platform. In point of size and social brilliancy, it was a most notable gathering. And the attention accorded the speaker and enthusiastic applause which greeted his words showed it to be one in entire sympathy with the cause for which Mr. Roosevelt had come south to uphold and give his support.

SPENT \$75 AN HOUR.

Tale of Extravagant Living Told By Two Robbers.

A tale of extravagant living was told to the police by Caesario Munoz, who, with Alfonso Garcia, is under arrest in San Francisco charged with robbing J. M. Sumaga, a millionaire mine owner, of the City of Mexico, of \$50,000 in jewels and nearly \$2,000 in cash. Munoz says that Garcia proposed that they set about spending the money without delay. They did so. Munoz estimates that during their waking hours they lived at the rate of \$75 an hour.

The detectives recovered \$583 in money and \$1,000 in jewels. Munoz, they say, has promised to find the remainder of the loot.

WOUNDS OFFICERS, KILLS SELF.

Ocala, Fla., Man Barricades Self in House and Fights Troops.

While attempting to arrest Will Summerlin on a trivial charge, at Ocala, Fla., Deputy Sheriff Hutson was fatally injured and ex-Sheriff Gordon was seriously injured when the latter fired upon the officers and barricaded himself in his home.

The Ocala Rifles were called out and surrounded the house. After firing at everybody in sight, he placed the muzzle of the gun in his mouth and blew his head off.

While trying to rescue other members of his family from his burning home, John H. Owens, a well-known insurance representative, of Conway, Ark., was probably fatally burned. James Nixon, another occupant of the house, was seriously injured and Mrs. Nixon was injured by jumping from a second-story window. Six other persons who were in the house at the time narrowly escaped death or injury by jumping from windows. The house was totally destroyed.

Notaries Public.

Notaries public are said to have been first appointed by the leaders of primitive Christians for the purpose of collecting data for the lives of the first century martyrs. It was a long time before the office had to do with legal employments, such as attesting deeds, wills, etc., and establishing their authenticity in any other country. There was much irregularity in the law concerning notaries until the year 1801, when statutes were passed in England and other countries fixing their duties. —New York American.

BY FOREST FIRES MANY LIVES LOST

Millions of Dollars in Property Also Destroyed.

FIRES BURNING SINCE JULY

Death Roll, It is Estimated, Will Reach Three Hundred or More—Crazed With Grief and Fear, People Wander Woods Half Clad.

Beaudette, Spooner, Pitt and Graceton, Minn., were wiped off the map by a forest fire Sunday. The bodies of seventy-five settlers have been located and it is thought the death roll among the settlers will be upwards of 300.

Wagon loads of human bodies are being brought into the railway station at Beaudette.

It is reported that many settlers, crazed with grief at the loss of families and property, are roaming the woods and searching parties are constantly going out looking for the injured, the dead and the demented. One family of nine, one of seven and one of five were destroyed on Friday night.

Tornado of Fire.

A tornado of fire struck Beaudette and Spooner and within three minutes after the first alarm every building was ablaze, and within an hour they were heaps of ashes. The people of these two towns had just sufficient time to get out of their homes with what they had on their backs.

They were loaded onto a passenger train that was standing at the depot and taken to Rainy River, Ont. The whole country east of Warroad is on fire. Roosevelt, Swift, Williams and Cedar Spur are in great danger. All the women and children are being rapidly removed to places of safety.

Thousands Are Homeless.

The Canadian Northern railway has stationed trains at every station at the service of the people and is doing everything in its power to relieve the situation. The people of Beaudette and Spooner and the settlers through the north control part of the state have lost everything. Five thousand are homeless, and the greater part of them absolutely destitute. Help must reach them in the next day or two, and that, in a substantial way, as the greater part of them are but half clad.

It will be impossible to get details and names of the dead and injured before tomorrow, and some of the dead will not be found until spring. It will be impossible to estimate the damages or casualties until later, but the pioneers of northern Minnesota, must have help.

\$1,000,000 CAPITAL.

National Bank of Commerce Soon to Organize.

The National Bank of Commerce, with \$1,000,000 capital and \$200,000 surplus, is about to become the latest addition to Atlanta's big financial institutions.

Details of the organization have been practically completed.

The new bank, which will make the seventh among Atlanta's national banks, will begin business about January 1.

Three locations in the heart of the city are now under consideration as temporary quarters; the permanent home of the new bank will be in one of Atlanta's well-known skyscrapers.

The organization committee is composed of about thirty-five prominent Atlanta and Georgia business men, chosen from among the more than 200 Georgians who have already subscribed to the bank's capital stock.

MANY PERSONS INJURED.

Spreading Rails Supposed to Have Wrecked Southern Train.

A dispatch from Asheville, N. C., says: Passenger train No. 18 on the Murphy division of the Southern railway, coming from Murphy to Asheville, was wrecked Saturday, twenty people being injured, two probably fatally. The cause of the wreck, near the station of Ella, was the derailment of three coaches which went over the embankment, piling up at the bottom in a mass of splintered wood, twisted iron and injured humanity.

The derailment of the three coaches is believed to have been caused by spreading of the rails.

A WICKED COUNTRY.

Missionary Appalled By the Conditions Existing in Alaska.

"In all my travels, since I started in my missionary work in 1871, covering more than 150,000 miles, this was my saddest trip. I never saw as much wickedness in all my life as I did in those northern cities and mining camps."

This statement was made by J. Logan Sample, Presbyterian missionary, 77 years old, who has just returned from a year's visit among mining camps of Alaska, and is en route to his home in Pittsburgh, says a Chicago, Ill., dispatch.

A Question of Identity.

A question in a recent examination on "The Merchant of Venice" was: "Give three reasons why Shylock hated Antonio."

One little girl wrote as one of her reasons: "Shylock hated Antonio because he was a Republican."

The teacher was puzzled. Where could the child have got that idea? Then she remembered that Shylock once said of Antonio, "How like a fawning publican he looks!"—National Monthly.